



**ANTELOPE VALLEY
UNION HIGH
SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**REQUEST FOR
PROPOSALS FOR
LEGAL SERVICES**

Request for Proposals Issued: December 19, 2022

Deadline for Submittal of Proposals: January 4, 2023

Request for Proposals for Legal Services

I. OBJECTIVE

The Antelope Valley Union High School District (District) utilizes the services of legal firms for various issues and advice. It is the intent of the District to continue this practice and to develop a list of firms qualified to provide such services in the areas of: General Legal Counsel, Human Resources, Employee Relations/Negotiations, Facilities, and Special Education. Firms that demonstrate expertise, and are subsequently designated, will be utilized. One or more firms may be engaged.

The overall objective of this Request For Proposal is to permit firms the opportunity to submit their relevant school district legal experience, client references, and proposed schedule of charges for consideration.

The District will request selected firms to provide a 20-minute presentation at a Special Board on January 12, 2023, wherein the Board plans on selecting a firm or firms to provide legal services in the area(s) as described below.

Background

The Antelope Valley Union High School District serves over 20,000 high school students on eight comprehensive high school campuses, four alternative high school campuses, two early-college campuses, a dependent charter school with two campuses, and one adult school with three campuses. The district serves a diverse student population with approximately 70% of students qualifying for free and reduced meals. The general fund budget is approximately \$410 million.

II. INSTRUCTIONS

Interested firms are invited to submit one (1) original signed proposal and five (5) additional hard copies. The proposal shall be made in the format provided; and the complete proposal, together with any and all additional materials, shall be enclosed in a sealed envelope addressed and delivered no later than 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 4, 2023 to the following address:

Antelope Valley Union High School District
Attn: Business Services
176 Holston Dr.
Lancaster, CA 93535

The sealed envelope shall be marked on the outside lower left corner with the words “Legal Services RFP”. It is the Proposer’s sole responsibility to ensure that their proposal is received prior to the scheduled closing time for receipt of proposals. No corrected or resubmitted proposals will be accepted after the deadline.

This Request for Proposals does not commit the Antelope Valley Union High School District to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in the preparation of a proposal responsive to this request. The District reserves the right to accept all or part of any proposal or to cancel in part or in its entirety this Request for Proposals. The District further reserves the right to accept the proposal that it considers to be in the best interest of the District.

All requirements must be addressed in the proposal. Non-responsive proposals will not be considered. All proposals, whether selected or rejected, shall become the property of the District. Firms are responsible for checking the website periodically for any updates or revisions to the RFP.

Requests for Information

Questions related to this RFP should be submitted in writing to Brian Hawkins, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services, at bhawkins@avhsd.org no later than January 3, 2023. Specify "RFP for Legal Services" in the subject line.

III. SCOPE OF SERVICES

The District is seeking proposals for legal services in the following areas. (Your proposal must indicate whether you are proposing to serve in all areas, only as General Counsel, or only as special counsel for services "B" through "E.") It is the intention of these specifications that the law firm hereunder could be engaged to provide one or a variety of services.

- A. General Legal Counsel – The General Counsel will provide consultation, advice, and opinions to the Superintendent, Key Personnel, and the Board; will attend Board Meetings as requested; and will coordinate the involvement of other specialist counsels, when required and if appropriate.
 - B. Human Resources
 - C. Employee Relations Negotiations
 - D. Facilities
 - E. Special Education
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A. GENERAL COUNSEL

- Provide advice and consultation with the Board of Trustees, the Superintendent, and Key Personnel in connection with their general and specific powers and duties. Available for telephone and individual conferences with the Board of Trustees and Administrators. Counsel is expected to respond, at least verbally, to be followed in writing, within a maximum of twenty-four hours when an inquiry is made by the Board or Administration.

As requested:

- Attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees, and attend meetings with committees or third parties upon request;
- **Document Preparation** - Prepare all legal documentation as requested;
- **In-service Education** - Prepare and present as requested in-service programs for administration, staff, and board members on pertinent problem areas in school law;
- **Information** - Provide periodic updates on administrative practice and board policies, including the review of important decisions and attorney general's opinions;
- **Policy Audit** - Upon request, audit board policy, administrative regulations, student and faculty personnel activities, and provide policy update recommendations and policy drafting assistance;
- **Special Opinions** - Prepare legal opinions at the request of the Board and the Superintendent;
- **Education Law** - Matters pertaining to education law, specifically the laws affecting K-12 education institutions; California state education law and other federal, state, and local laws pertaining to school districts; and common public education policies in the state of California. Monitor and review changes in public school law enacted by the legislature, and advise the Board and the Superintendent of the legislative changes and necessary Board and administrative actions;
- **School Employment Law** - Matters pertaining to non-collective bargaining and human resources law and policy, including employee benefit issues;
- **Student Services** - Matters pertaining to student services, including, but not limited to, special education, student discipline, and residency;
- **Nonprofit** - Matters pertaining to both California education service agencies and education foundations;

- **Lawsuits** - Initiate and/or defend lawsuits as necessary and at the direction of the Board; advise the Board on pending litigation and potential litigation, and obtain direction from the Board; and provide advice on actions to be taken by the Board and/or administration to avoid liability to the District; and
- **Miscellaneous** - Attend to other legal responsibilities and obligations of the Board, such as contracts and public bids, real estate/construction law, experience with regulatory compliance, constitutional law, special education, environmental issues, litigation, grievance hearings, disciplinary and contract non-renewal hearings, and expulsion hearings.

B. HUMAN RESOURCES

As requested:

- Provide advice, consultation, and representation of the District with respect to the employment, discipline, and dismissal of certificated and classified employees;
- Provide advice, consultation, and representation on issues involving District employees relative to: legal qualifications; teaching credentials and certificates, and other required licenses; proposed reductions in force and related seniority and tenure questions; various forms of leaves of absence; substitute and part-time employees; and matters related to compensation; and
- Provide advice, recommendations, and training related to employee investigations.

C. EMPLOYEE RELATIONS/NEGOTIATIONS

As requested:

- Provide advice, consultation, and representation on all matters related to certificated and classified collective bargaining and related negotiated agreement development;
- Labor Law - Matters pertaining to collective bargaining and all applicable laws related to labor/management relations in the public-school setting;
- Provide advice, consultation, and representation on grievances and actions taken to PERB, hearings, etc.; and
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to employee relations and negotiations.

D. FACILITIES

As requested:

- Provide advice, consultation, and representation related to real property matters, including acquisition, disposition, environmental impact reports, leasing and construction of facilities, as well as contract and bidding requirements;
- Provide advice, consultation, and representation related to facility measures, such as General Obligation Bonds, Mello Roos taxes, etc.;
- Provide advice and consultation related to formation and responsibilities of facility-related committees, such as the Bond Oversight Committee; and
- Provide such other services that are inherent in matters related to school facilities.

E. SPECIAL EDUCATION

As requested:

- Provide advice, consultation, and representation in connection with the placement of special needs students, including participation in hearings and representation in related administrative and judicial proceedings; and
- Provide such other services as are inherent in matters related to the provision of services to special needs students.

IV. CONTENTS FOR PROPOSALS

In order for proposals to be considered, said proposal must be clear, concise, complete, well organized, and demonstrate both respondents' qualifications and their ability to follow instructions. The quality of answers, not length of responses or visual exhibits, is important in the proposal.

The proposal shall be organized in the format listed below. Respondents shall read each item carefully and answer each of the following items accurately to ensure compliance with District requirements.

A. Submittal Letter

Include the RFP's title and submittal due date and the name, address, fax number, and telephone number of the responding firm. Include a contact person and corresponding e-mail address. The letter shall state that the proposal shall be valid for a 60-day period and that the staff proposed is available immediately to work on this project. The person authorized by the firm to negotiate a contract with the District shall sign the cover letter.

B. Description of Firm

This section should provide an overview and history of your firm, and its practice in California, as well as the type of legal services for which your firm is submitting a proposal, and the approach that will be used in meeting the needs of the District. Please also include what areas of law are firm specialties.

C. Description of Experience

Use this section to indicate the areas of expertise of your firm and how the firm’s expertise will enable the District to benefit from that expertise. Include at least three (3) school districts with similar demographics, along with the name(s) of individuals familiar with your work at those school districts and submitted as references that can be contacted by District staff.

D. Team

Please provide the names and résumés of staff who would be working with the District, including their home office location in California. Specifically discuss the individual(s)’ experience in providing legal and advisory services to an organization and program similar in size and scope as specified in this RFP. Please indicate who the primary contact will be and who will be responsible for the day-to-day work with the District.

E. Fee Schedule

Describe in detail all fees to be charged, including hourly rates for each level of services. Describe how you might adjust your fees for subsequent years of the contract. Describe in detail charges for travel, telephone calls, and any other expenses to be separately billed. Indicate how billings are specific for each area/case. Also, identify billing increments (i.e., 1/10 hour, 1/4 hour, etc.).

F. Miscellaneous

Please provide the following additional information:

- Include a sample billing statement.
- General communications protocol for responding to client questions.
- List any additional services that your firm provides but which were not listed in the Request for Proposals.
- Provide details of any litigation against your firm within the last five (5) years.
- Copy of firm’s Professional Liability Certificate of Insurance.

V. **SELECTION CRITERIA**

The AVUHSD Board of Trustees will evaluate and select those firms deemed to be the most highly qualified to perform the required services. The evaluation of proposals and the basis of award will be based on the review and analysis of numerous factors, which will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- Background and experience in providing work as identified in the Scope of Services section of this RFP. Possess at least ten (10) years of legal experience with at least five (5) years of experience representing a public-school district in California in a manner that demonstrates the respondents' trustworthiness.
- Qualifications of personnel.
- References of work done of similar nature.
- Costs, including hourly rates for all levels of service and personnel, travel time costs, and costs for support services of word processing, copying, etc.

Upon evaluation of all submitted proposals, a limited number of firms deemed most qualified to provide the requested legal services may be invited to present their qualifications and respond to questions from panel members. The panel may include, but will not be limited to, Board of Trustees members, Superintendent, Cabinet members, and others qualified to rate providers.